

# FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL

## MAPPING GENDER AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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**REPORT ON THE EXPERT  
GROUP MEETING: RESEARCH  
LANDSCAPE IN GENDER AND  
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**



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## REPORT ON THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING: RESEARCH LANDSCAPE IN GENDER AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

### Overall research questions

Purpose of the meeting: to identify key trends, gaps as well as priority areas to inform the potential development of a feminist research agenda and network in this field.

### Expected outcomes of the meeting:

- Collect feedback and additional inputs on the research mapping report undertaken by APC
- Set a feminist research agenda for the next two to three years.

### Process:

Facilitated conversation among the participants to discuss:

- Scoping thematic focus of the network: access, economy/labour, embodiment/agency, participation/decision-making
- Scoping different network models: what works, what doesn't about research networks.

Name	Region	Country	Organisation
Anonymous	MENA		
Becky Faith	Global	UK	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)
Bruna Zanolli	Latin America	Brazil	Vadias de campinas, Vedetas (vedetas.org/) and Thydewá.
Caitlin Bentley	Asia/Europe	UK/Singapore	Singapore Internet Research Centre
Catalina Alzate	Latin America/Asia	Colombia/India	Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Chat Garcia Ramilo	Asia	Philippines	Association for Progressive Communications
Chenai Chair	Africa	South Africa	Research ICT Africa
Elena Pavan	Europe	Italy	University of Trento (Italy)
Horacio F. Sívori	Latin America	Brazil	Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro/ Sexuality Policy Watch
Jac sm Kee	Asia	Malaysia	Association for Progressive Communications
Jennifer Radloff	Africa	South Africa	Association for Progressive Communications
Jinnie Chae	Global	South Korea	Fembot Collective
Kalyani Menon Sen	Asia	India	Gender at Work
Katerina Fialova	Europe	Czech Republic	Association for Progressive Communications
Mariana Valente	Latin America	Brazil	InternetLab – Law and Technology Research Center
Matthew Smiths	North America	Canada	International Development Research Centre
Namita Aavriti	Asia	India	Association for Progressive Communications
Patricia Pena	Latin America	Chile	Académica del Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen, Universidad de Chile
Ruhiya Seward	North America	Canada	International Development Research Centre
Ruth Nyambura	Africa	Kenya	African Ecofeminists Collective
Safia Khan	Africa	South Africa	University of Cape Town/ Development Policy Research Unit
Tigist Shewarega Hussen	Africa	Ethiopia/ South Africa	University of Western Cape

## DAY ONE - 29 SEPTEMBER: EXPLORE

### Expected outcomes:

- Getting to know each other and agreed way to work together
- Peer-review of research findings of the Association for Progressive Communications' mapping exercise
- Identifying key research questions for feminist research agenda for the next decade

### Sessions

- Welcome and introductions; getting to know each other
- Expectations of participants and agreements for working together
- Mapping the gender and technology field (Presentation of APC Mapping Exercise Findings – Questions & Answers)

The first day of the workshop began with an introduction of the facilitation team and of the participants.

This was followed by an in-depth presentation of the mapping study report done by APC-WRP along the thematic areas or research buckets identified around access, economy and labour, embodiment, movement building, expression.

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Katerina Fialova led the welcome and introductions to the three-day expert group meeting Mapping the Research Landscape of Gender and Digital Technology on key trends and emerging priorities in the field of gender and digital technology, in Port Dickson, Malaysia on 29 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER 2017.

The meeting brought together activist and academic researchers working on gender and digital technology (hereinafter referred to as the participants) – in particular issues of economy and labour, intersectionality, embodiment and agency, access, expression and movement building – to discuss and reflect on the research landscape for the next decade. The meeting aimed to identify key trends, gaps as well as priority areas to inform the potential development of a feminist research agenda and network in this field.

The agenda of the meeting was to verify the mapping study of the research undertaken by APC for International Development Research Centre (IDRC) that involves both a literature review as well as interviews with activists and researchers engaged in this field. Through the workshop, the knowledge, expertise and engagement with these issues in the research and work and the critical insights of those participating will feed into the mapping study.

The participants invited for this expert meeting:

- were involved in research networks or initiatives
- focused on the area of gender (and related intersectionalities) and information communication technology (whether as primary or included focus)
- in particular, individuals/organisations involved in research networks whether as convenors, partners or participants.

The workshop was facilitated by Jennifer Radloff (APC-Women's Rights Programme) and Kalyani Menon Sen (Gender at Work, India); Jennifer Radloff's expertise in organising workshops and modules on digital security, and digital storytelling workshops combined with Kalyani Menon Sen's work on movements and feminist ethics was particularly useful in holding together a workshop with a diversity of participants from different locations and also from academia and civil society. They led the session on agreements for working together – creating a feminist, interactive, safe, peer-learning, self-owned space. Everybody's expectations from the meeting were shared through an interactive session.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS**

The expectations and skills or resources are clustered around network, methodology, perspectives, research agenda, energy and interactions.



What do you expect?	What do you bring?
<p><b>Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A research network started</li> <li>• A thorough discussion on network formation, network sustainability and resilience</li> <li>• Find partners for future collaboration</li> <li>• Create and grow a transnational network of feminist researchers</li> <li>• Focusing on whether I do gender research or feminist research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I bring ideas on how to conduct participatory research, how to include art and design in the research process</li> <li>• Research network experience</li> <li>• Importance of data collection on the micro-level to understand issues of gender in ICTs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get to know how the different members are approaching the field – and their perspectives</li> <li>• Learning more about gender and ICT in the Global South</li> <li>• Ways to foster cross-disciplinary work to achieve gender in ICT goals</li> <li>• A productive discussion on critical approaches to gender, sexuality and ICTs</li> <li>• Learn about new research methods</li> <li>• Discuss new methodological approaches to allow us (to) engage hidden population into the research</li> <li>• Peer review of the APC research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm going to introduce Fembot Collective, a feminist academic movement through an online journal with a mentor-mentee program</li> <li>• Questions and a close reading focused on the disjunctures, transits, and (good) trafficking between academia and activism</li> <li>• Research experience in analysing outcomes of policy decisions</li> <li>• Experience of having worked on multiple fairly long-term research projects with partners</li> <li>• To share the experience of being (a) researcher/activist/practitioner in gender/digital tech (ICTs) in/from Chile</li> <li>• Experience on trying to influence policy based on research evidence</li> </ul>
<p><b>Perspectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of awesome ideas</li> <li>• I expect to learn and get a feeling of the current trends in feminist ICT studies</li> <li>• Seeing where to (go) next in my research work</li> <li>• I expect to learn about how power relations manifest for women in the different countries we are from</li> <li>• Getting a better grasp of the intersections of gender and digital technology and its application in the ecological justice field</li> <li>• Learn more about the latest work being done about feminism and the internet from a research framework</li> <li>• Learn more about the intersection of gender and ICT themes I am still not working with</li> <li>• An expanded understanding of research issues relating to ICTs and gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminist analysis on emerging ICT issues</li> <li>• Networks, research and critical thinking on emerging intersections of gender, technology and eco justice</li> <li>• Critical global perspective</li> <li>• Listening skills</li> <li>• Bring same academic knowledge of gender/tech from computing/HCI?;</li> <li>• 15 years (of) experience working in civil society on human rights/technology issues; Connecting with research in international development in other sectors e.g. economics, health, etc.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Agenda (research)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeper understanding of frontier, critical issues in gender and tech (for digital feminism)</li> <li>• Feminist research agenda (of sorts – not consensus entirely but beginning); methodology conversations</li> <li>• I'm starting a research action project on migrant women and ICT in the U.S., mostly Latin American women. I expect to get theoretical inputs, ideas, contacts, good vibes to collaborate and do awesome stuff!</li> <li>• Clear idea of a feminist / technology research agenda and gaps</li> <li>• A collaboratively developed, critical research agenda</li> <li>• Clarity on what research areas are really needed in the field</li> <li>• To understand the main gaps and priorities according to the group</li> <li>• Excellent research agenda</li> <li>• Laws and regulations around the internet and how it affects women in particular</li> <li>• Focusing my personal goals in the internet space for young women and men</li> </ul>	<p>Feminist research in ICT</p> <p>Online social movements and feminist activism in the Global South, Africa in particular</p>
<p><b>Energy</b></p> <p>To become part of a feminist digital tech research network and to understand what that means for my research in the future; making connections, friends</p> <p>Good ideas and warnings on what makes a strong research network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of ideas</li> <li>• Humour and order</li> <li>• I bring ideas on how contemporary art practices can be included (in) policy, academic, economic, social science research</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• I bring positivism</li> <li>• Experience in bringing gender grassroots / research field and digital rights field together</li> <li>• APC-WRP report; Some ironic distance from digital tech/ICTs as a solution</li> <li>• My expertise – my deepest commitment, my ideas on possible funding schemes and networking project possibilities, my gratitude</li> <li>• Ideas and connections for potential exchanges, collaborations, and network-marking for research on gender, sexuality and ICTs</li> <li>• Enthusiasm for awesome research</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interactions</b></p> <p>Good conversations</p> <p>Share knowledge; learn from others; participate; integrate</p> <p>Getting to know a bunch of really interesting methodologies and approaches</p> <p>I expect to build a network with feminists who are studying on gender and technology</p> <p>I expect to speak in Spanish!!</p> <p>To get to know better people and projects that I follow through internet so we can change experiences and dreams about how to improve gender equality with the mediation of technology</p> <p>Hear about other people's work and research</p>	<p>My practical and theoretical research on women and technology; the willing to exchanges; an open ear</p> <p>Thoughtful reflections – from different hats</p> <p>To introduce – present the work of girls in tech while promoting different activities; to share/contribute with good energies</p>

## MAPPING THE GENDER AND TECHNOLOGY FIELD

Katerina introduced the mapping study and methodology. She shared that the mapping study is meant to map what some of the trends in current years are, focusing on four areas in particular (access, embodiment, economy and labour, and movement building). What the expert group meeting was meant to achieve is mapping the actors doing feminist analysis (and also gender based analysis), identifying key issues and gaps in these areas, gaps in action-driven research, and also to answer questions of what constitutes a successful research network.

Katerina shared that the process of doing this mapping study started with informal consultations at the Internet Freedom Festival, followed by distribution of the scoping survey through our networks. Those responding to the survey were also asked to share and recommend literature and the research initiatives we should talk to – 170 responses about 200 resources and analysed it in the literature review.

Based on the themes from the literature review, we did interviews with key academics and researchers, spoke to them to understand the nuances and difficulties, to identify the trends and gaps. We collected 23 interviews, attempting to balance regional and thematic focus, academic and civil society researchers, feminist researchers in emerging (big data, algorithm), intersectionality and sexuality issues and those who are working on development and women's rights. One of our objectives was to speak to new people, beyond our regular partners.

**We want you to help us fill the gaps, prioritise the key emerging issues.**

Namita did a broad introduction of the mapping study, especially laying out the structure of the mapping study. Since the mapping study is available in full this report does not cover the contents of the mapping study as it was presented, and focuses on discussions, questions, key decisions and resolutions made at the expert group meeting.

In 2014 when the first meeting on Imagine a Feminist Internet was held, it led to many shared understandings around what is important and relevant for a feminist analysis of gender and technology. The meeting brought together 52 women's rights, sexual rights and internet rights activists from six continents to discuss one question: **"As feminists, what kind of internet do we want, and what will it take for us to achieve it?"**<sup>1</sup>

This was then articulated as 12 principles or key points around what a feminist internet would look like, and these 12 principles were clustered into five key areas of interest and intervention for research, advocacy and activism. It is from the perspective of this structuring that we re-looked at the research taking place around gender and technology.

**A feminist internet works towards empowering more women and queer persons – in all our diversities – to fully enjoy our rights, engage in pleasure and play, and dismantle patriarchy. This integrates our different realities, contexts and specificities including age, disabilities, sexualities, gender identities and expressions, socio-economic locations, political and religious beliefs, ethnic origins, and racial markers.**<sup>2</sup>

1. Caturani, D. (2016, 23 May). Feminist Principles of the Internet: Two years later. *Three key issues for a feminist internet: Access, agency and movements: GenderIT edition* <https://www.genderit.org/edition/three-key-issues-feminist-internet-access-agency-and-movements>
2. <https://feministinternet.net/>

The key principles are critical towards realising a feminist internet, and are clustered around **access, movements and public participation, economy, agency, expression**.

Feminist analysis is about a structural analysis of power dynamics and begins from the lived experiences of women, and more broadly all people at the intersections of various axes of exclusion and discrimination, compelled to engage from a position of marginality and/or subordination with assemblages of power. It is with this in mind that for research we take embodied experiences and embodiment to guide and locate feminist analysis. Centering our research and knowledge production around **embodied and lived experience** is what will ensure that our methods remain reflexive, open and accountable and therefore it is included as a thematic area as well, especially in relation also to agency. Another realisation was that prior to 2006 the focus in research was largely on ICTs, as is evident from the analysis of Gurumurthy, Hafkin and Odame. In the context of emerging areas of study particularly the impact of datafication (national identity cards, biometrics, data collection by companies, etc.) on gender and Fintech on economies and new forms of labour, also the use of digital video and tools in storytelling and expression (around sexuality, violence and sexual assault, experiences of minority communities and people, etc.) the focus was shifted from ICTs to broadly digital technology.

**Thematic areas include access, economy and labour, embodiment, expression and movement building.**

Doing the mapping study was particularly difficult until we arrived at the above structuring for the report, and even then specific topics fell under several themes rather than any one. For instance, sexuality is about embodiment, expression and movement building, and access is intrinsically linked to questions around movements and how diverse or inclusive they are. Expression is explored as a theme that cuts across embodiment and movement building. Yet we attempt to stick to this thematic breakdown not so much as a neat division of areas, but as research buckets that we want to explore. In the next chapter we explore all these in detail.

## **Responses and questions**

Responses to the presentation were led by questions about how the mapping study would be shared. Elena Pavan asked about how the report was going to be delivered or made public. Namita responded that a part of the research, especially on gaps in the study of gender and digital technology, was already available through a GenderIT edition.<sup>3</sup>

Katerina shared that the mapping study in full and a synthesis is likely to be published, and that the project was ending in November. Horacio F. Sivori suggested that at the end of the meeting there should be a collective discussion on what sort of publishing would make it most effective.

Responding in particular to the visual above, Chennai Chair asked if there was any way to map if organisations are working on similar or same aspects of an issue, and whether they were speaking to each other. Katerina and Elena shared that the visual was based on primary data from the literature review of past research and it would be difficult to map aspects like shared research. When asked how certain organisations in the visualisation

3. GenderIT Team and various authors. (2017, 10 September). *"We cannot be what we cannot see": Mapping gaps in research in gender and information society. GenderIT edition*. <https://www.genderit.org/edition/we-cannot-be-what-we-cannot-see-mapping-gaps>

Many responded that the visualisation was impressive, “awesome and beautiful”, and particularly helpful as it revealed in which areas there was relatively less research taking place. For instance, Jac sm Kee pointed out that the part of the mapping that was least connected to the others was around participation in decision making. However it was also pointed out that the visual will be shifting since it doesn’t map movement building, expression and some thematic areas.

There was some interest to see this visualisation as shifting rather than fixed, and as a snapshot of the current landscape of research in gender and digital technology. This could also indicate shifts in funding agendas, responses to external changes, technology and so on. This method of visualisation in particular could become an interactive tool.

1. The usefulness of visualisations as an exercise to create snapshots of the current landscape of research, to map connections, areas that are not connected to other areas of interest, and what connections should be drawn.
2. The usefulness of visualisation as well as periodic mappings to see the shifts over time of the interests in a field, of what these shifts are in response to.
3. That the mapping of the field within these research buckets was broadly helpful, there are obviously some overlaps and tensions however. Agency in particular was regarded as a general term, not useful specifically to map research projects. It was thus removed from the mapping structure.

The first theme broadly encompasses the barriers to access and use of ICTs based on gender. Despite growing attention apparently being paid to the so-called “gender digital divide” over the past few years, latest statistics from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) indicate that the gap between men and women’s ability to access the internet may be increasing. There is therefore not only a need for a better understanding of why access initiatives thus far have failed, but also for development efforts to extend from “talking” or publishing reports to taking practical steps and tangible “action” grounded in an understanding of women as agents as opposed to women as beneficiaries.

## Responses and questions

Some of the questions raised in relation to access were:

- Is the term itself a useful one? “Do I have to use the term access as a feminist technology researcher?” It brings with it its own liberal assumptions and carries the assumption that technology is a neutral tool.
- This is a field dominated by policy, and there’s a lot of stuff already in place. I think we try to get at our discomforts and negotiate those things.
- Access The directional quality inherent in the term access was discussed: it generally tends to denote access to/from the centre from/for the periphery, which one of the participants noted “denies intersectional power dynamics”.

Ruth Nyambura from the African Ecofeminists Collective started the discussion stating that “at one point or the other, we need to have more people in the room” when we talk about access. Discussions around access need to be rooted in structural critiques of power. “In a lot of the discussion around inclusion/exclusion, it is actually not even a critique of power. It is not a critique of the structural reasons why this is happening.”

She also pointed out that we must acknowledge that the internet is a space replete with threats of death and violence, and therefore what is it that we want to provide access to

Mariana Valente made a related observation: that the neoliberal approach to access has included Zero Rating plans and Facebook’s Free Basics plans, which represent one form of “democratisation” of access. Again, access is not enough; access is related with relevance to people’s lives, uses and appropriations of ICTs. “The social uses, social appropriations are related with access to services and content.”

Jac said that the question of access is also seen as an economic project. There is interest and research on questions of basic infrastructure – mobiles, last-mile connectivity, such analysis should be framed through a power analysis. Who has control over the devices, how is access regulated, and can mobile devices be trigger points for gender-based violence?

In framing the research questions themselves, it is important to make a decision, Jac argued. “It can be extremely complicated to have a macro conversation about access.” This in turn affects the nature of the data needed. If it’s a “macro” conversation, macro-level data is needed, which is at the household level and does not often differentiate between the sexes. But gender disaggregated data is needed for conversations about the digital gender divide.

Safia Khan in particular raised questions about data on access. Despite there being lots of data on access, it is useful to ask what data is to be relied on, and where it comes from. The sources of the data determine who is asking the questions and what questions are asked. Intergovernmental organisations, such as the World Bank, have the resources to offer global snapshots through data, but the questions tend to remain the same. “The data



that are available in the end are not the data that we need.” In the era of big data, the implicit assumption is that big data is better data, which should not be taken for granted.

The politics of gaining access to the data can be complicated: one participant (anonymous) who had conducted a quantitative and qualitative study for the World Bank, observed that they cannot say anything about the data for six months due to the contract they had. Corporations such as GSMA (Groupe Speciale Mobile Association) have a lot of data, but it is only made available when they feel that it is consumable by the public (for example, data on women who have been connected is easily and frequently available). “The data might be there, but what are the politics around getting that data, and who can use it and in what way?”

Another requirement that was brought up was the need for statistical agencies, including policymakers and ICT ministries, to take the need for collecting individual-level data seriously. This could lead to complications around privacy of the individual, but it could also be collected in a manner similar to the census or surveys done by the government, that regularly collects and anonymises data.

*Clear definitions can go a long way in specifying the usage of a term. The term “access” tends to presuppose “someone who is giving access to,” connoting that the giver is in a position of power and the receiver is not. Similarly, with inclusion, the question of “inclusion into what structure” needs to be considered.*

Kalyani observed that access is used in a very instrumental way in policy documents – access to information on birth control, health schemes, etc. This policy approach to access blunts the activist/researcher use of access as a right. Such a usage is “a way of silencing the power questions within access and it’s done deliberately as part of policy.”

Clear definitions can go a long way in specifying the usage of a term. The term “access” tends to presuppose “someone who is giving access to,” connoting that the giver is in a position of power and the receiver is not. Similarly, with inclusion, the question of “inclusion into what structure” needs to be considered.

Other questions around access brought up by the discussion included: decision-making and control of technology; research on spectrum allocation. These are generally male-dominated fields, both in terms of policy making and the corporate and technology spaces as well.

## Key outputs and decisions

- The importance of talking about feminism and technology from a global south perspective: because there is a lack of a Global South perspective in this conversation.
- Especially for data geeks and quantitative geeks: an important project is to critique methodologies for data collection and findings based on data – for example in reports by Intel or GSMA. “How do you extrapolate, you know, something for a whole country based on an interview with 40 people?”
- Trying to address the big access problem with bigger and bigger data sets is a flawed approach, the nature of the data has to be delved into, different questions need to be asked to uncover power dynamics
- Access needs to be addressed at multiple levels – and always as an enabler to the realisation of human rights. This also helps frame questions for research. The work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in this regard was discussed positively.

- The term access has many problems – it implies a bringing in of people into the mainstream, regardless of the inequalities, injustice and violence in this mainstream, and also that access moves only in one direction – from periphery to centre. It was felt however that we need to frame access in a feminist language and ethos, rather than discard the term since access is embedded in international and national law and policy and in corporate agendas and within this space of negotiation we have to use the available terms around access. One step taken by several organisations is to reframe access in more meaningful and substantial terms, and especially to place it within the human rights framework.



The history of the connection between internet technologies, economy, labour and gender lies in the fact that women used to literally be computers – they did the jobs of calculation and data processing that were initially the primary functions of computing devices. It was in those days that the scientific world was welcoming of women in these positions, including black women and women of colour.<sup>4</sup> In the context of high-income countries, one of the relevant concerns raised since the 1990s was about the presence of women in technology careers and education, and more broadly in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). However through the interviews and also the expert group meeting, it becomes apparent that from a Global South perspective what is perhaps more relevant is gendered labour. Gendered labour broadly refers to the ways in which labour and work is divided amongst people based on gender expression and roles, and certain kinds of labour are expected particularly of women – it refers to a historical split of productive vs reproductive work, or work inside and outside the domestic sphere.

Economy and labour is generally overshadowed in digital studies both in academia and civil society research, so it was appreciated that the question of gender in relation to economy and labour is raised separately from that of questions of access.



In response to the presentation, Mariana Valente reiterated that it is important that domestic work and care work are considered as labour. Safia also said that the link or feedback effect between ICTs, education and the labour market is not entirely about formal education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). She quoted a study that showed that even though there is low representation of women in STEM, women also use ICTs for informal businesses and in fishing villages. ICTs are drivers of labour market outcomes, even informal labour or small enterprises.

In relation to STEM in particular, Jac said that though there is a lot of research on women in STEM, how much of this conversation is driven by the private sector and to what impact? The corporations do want to increase women representation but in terms of feminist politics or even impact on gender equity, increasing the numbers is not the most exciting outcome.

In relation to this, Jac said **there are two levels at which the questions of economy, labour and gender can be unpacked – one is about the paradigm/framework that is leading and emerging (communicative capitalism, information economy, “sharing economy”), what kinds of materials and resources are being extracted for this, and secondly at the individual level of bodies, what work is being done.** In between these are questions of ownership and agency, that have to be addressed in relation to gender. “You can enter at the level of bodies, the labour they engage in, the data that they generate, the context of their economy, their histories of colonialism. This would shift the question from a simplistic understanding of ICTs as empowerment.”

Another aspect that was discussed was whether questions around economy and labour actually open up certain new terrains. “Feminist digital economics” would look at the impact of digital economy through the lens of gender and especially also in the context of neoliberalism and globalisation. At the same time we can also look at some of the new ideas around a feminist commons, but also self care, digital security and how to share knowledge of how ICTs can be used to exploit those who are vulnerable, including women.

Kalayni asked whether commodification in the digital economy had benefited women, or other minorities including indigenous people.

Jac noted that it is hard to keep track of developments in relation to economy and labour at a global scale, as many of these negotiations are taking place through bilateral and global trade agreements. This was reiterated by Elena pointing out the role of the International Monetary Fund, and the particularly precarious context of gendered labour in countries that are not governed by labour regulations.

At the same time there is much production of discourse around gender and economy, and women in STEM careers including Sheryl Sandberg’s book and blog<sup>5</sup> on how women have to lean in in corporate culture to get ahead. Sandberg’s experience as the CEO of Facebook has led to a cultish following of this rhetoric that shifts the onus of gender parity and equity in the workplace from the state or corporate entity back to the individual woman. Jac pointed out that such discourse is often removed from structural reality of gender differences.

Mariana Valente pointed out that in spite of the existence of the internet, ICTs and job websites, women don’t want to find domestic work through such mechanisms because they don’t trust them yet, and are unsure if they will be safe. This is somewhat similar to how women are unable to work in call centres and do late night shifts when public transport is not safe or apps like Uber are unable to guarantee safety.

5. <https://leanin.org/>

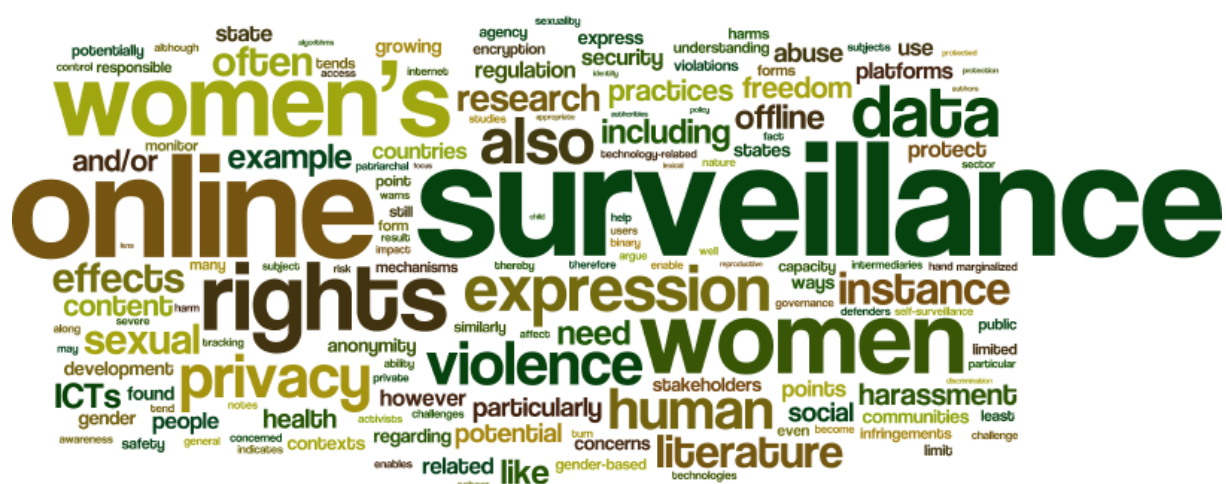
*The balance between personal, sexual and economic empowerment and the location of women embedded within the network economy is not as yet very clear.*

Elena also pointed out that even though workplaces are avowedly progressive, the experience of women or that of gender non conforming or transgender people is not always positive. Often people are not respected or they are ignored. In many conversations it was pointed out that in the digital economy women were perhaps coming from homes, families and/or contexts that were patriarchal, and jobs were creating opportunities for them to get away, get a measure of independence, own a mobile phone, etc. However all this was taking place in an exploitative economic context. The balance between personal, sexual and economic empowerment and the location of these women embedded within the network economy is not as yet very clear. Jac also pointed out that rather than talk about rights of people, governments and corporations talk about the benefits of smart city, development and role of AI – how do these help in the realisation of human rights.

### Key outputs and decisions

- To understand that what is considered labour is a feminist and political question, domestic work and care work are to be considered as labour
- Economy and labour can be understood at the systemic level of the network economy, sharing economy, communicative capitalism, and so on, but also at the level of the bodies and people and their agency
- Workplace cultures, sexual harassment, sexism will have to be addressed, whether in corporate cultures, movement spaces and technology spaces
- Discourse of human rights in relation to questions of economy and labour
- This opens up a field of “feminist digital economics” that looks at the impact of digital economy through the lens of gender
- Feminist commons, digital security and self care as nodes of thinking and unpacking .

## EMBODIMENT



The digital age or the information age has been described as post human – here technology and body combine and collude from a molecular to a grander scale. Forms of digital technology have taken prosthetic and intimate forms in our lives. Simultaneously

the body is rendered and converted to information and data by governments, corporates, social media, welfare agencies and so on. Historically feminist theory has focused on the women's lived experiences of the body, that the body is both a material thing in the world as well a point of view towards the world.<sup>6</sup>

In the 2000s the work by feminist groups and the women's movement online on forms of online gender-based violence (GBV) was responsible for shifting the focus away from looking only at the emancipatory potential of technology. The internet can be a terrain of violence of various kinds: stalking, abuse, harassment, threats, etc. This critique – of the role of ICTs in maintaining hegemony – which seems so commonplace now can be traced back to women's rights advocates and feminists who opposed the binary of virtual and real to insist that violence that takes place online is violence and that it violates consent. At the same time it was important to also foreground that the internet was a site for expression for women and other minorities, especially around sex, sexuality, reproductive issues and rights.<sup>7</sup> As technologies of control mesh with biopower and surveillance at a much larger scale, these positions taken by feminists and women's groups seem prescient, almost prophetic. Both in terms of insisting that violence takes place online and of insisting on the inclusion of a human rights framework in ICT for Development (ICT4D) and broadly in relation to all technology spaces.

Many of the topics dealt with in this section in different ways dissolve the binary of human and technology, whether by exploring sexuality and gender expression through forums and blogs online, online GBV or datafication. The emphasis is on knowledge that comes from **lived and embodied experience** that has to be the basis of feminist research, advocacy around law and policy, and an understanding of the human condition.

## Responses to presentation

One of the concerns raised by Elena (University of Trento, Italy) at the expert group meeting on mapping gender and digital technology was that online GBV is overwhelming and will probably dominate the concerns within the thematic of embodiment but also broadly within the field of research on gender and digital technology, and that we should be watchful of this.

In relation to online GBV, which was the first topic that came up for discussion, the questions raised were first about legality and what sort of legal instruments are available. Attention was also drawn to the necessity of taking a nuanced position on online GBV as it is seen as conflicting with free speech and expression, especially within the discourse on internet rights. But does it have to be seen as free speech versus addressing online GBV? Even within the movement for women's rights, feminist analysis on internet and internet rights, there is an understanding that there is a hierarchy of rights that is being debated here. For instance many feminists would be against incarceration on the grounds that the majority of those who are incarcerated and are in jails right now are men belonging to minority or vulnerable communities.

On the other hand, another complication in relation to online GBV is that it is often linked to other forms of hate speech which is racist or casteist. There are negative stereotypes of Romani people, black people, Dalits, etc. and what happens when such perceptions also enter into the ways in which online violence and harassment takes place. In the discussion

6. De Beauvoir, S. *The Second Sex*

7. Association for Progressive Communication – Women's Networking Support Programme. (2000). *Women's networks and ICTs: The character, achievements and challenges past and present of the APC WNSP. APC Annual Report*. [www.apc.org/en/about/history/womens-networks-apc-wnsf-founding](http://www.apc.org/en/about/history/womens-networks-apc-wnsf-founding)

that followed this point there was an emphasis put on whether other disciplines like masculinity studies would be helpful to unpack the role of aggressors and violence here. In response to, particularly, the phenomenon of non-consensual sharing of intimate images (NCII), that also was explained further by Mariana. The research by Internet Lab focuses on legal decisions. For instance, they took all the decisions of one state of Sao Paulo. One of the findings was that there were more cases on violence related to NCII than about the dissemination of the images themselves. One of the questions raised was whether legal solution and incarceration is always the best solution. Several of the instances of NCII involved violence committed by teenagers towards teenagers, and in such instances is incarceration really the best solution? What was also pointed out was that, in terms of prevention and sex education around this, there is an absence of support networks, health workers and teachers. Mariana shared, "These girls could not find any support within their community, this went on a few years before the adults know, and even then the parents got to know only because it was reported in the media."

In response to this Safia said that even if the technology platforms, like Facebook, allow for immediate reporting, how effective is that without a support network? Horacio remarked on how the circulation of private or sexual images (without consent) particularly leads to consequences (shame, loss of reputation, jobs, etc.) when such images go offline. He stressed that the justice system that is in place, formal or informal, should respond to what the woman (or girl) wants. He pointed out that when we think of NCII and even leaks of intimate images we tend to think of them as leaking into "an abstract, wide open, online field" but actually it is when the images reach those networks grounded in face to face relations (like the family, church, school, etc.) that there are specific kinds of social and economic consequences, like being ostracised or punished.

*"What is at the center of non consensual circulation/sharing of intimate images is not just revenge but also humiliation, and humiliating women is very central to establishing boys' masculinity."*

Another gaping hole in the scoping of this field is that not much attention is paid to aggressors. Horacio said that aggressors also organise and they have agency too, and these acts or attributes are not to be viewed, examined and understood only in relation to the experience of the "victim". "There is a need to unpack violence, we tend to look at it as a black box. Violence is generative as well, it produces knowledge, it educates and it organises community." He cautioned that it is not about nationalism, religious or other kinds of groupings around which either violence or masculinity is organised. What is at the centre of NCII is not just revenge but also humiliation, and "humiliating women is very central to establishing boys' masculinity."

Another aspect that was discussed in relation to embodiment was datafication and algorithmic decision making, particularly in the space of smart cities. One of the points raised was that smart cities are constructed around the figure of the average citizen, and this is usually imagined as men. Women's concerns are not necessarily factored in whether these are around safety or other issues – for instance, does the smart city create spaces where women can walk alone at night?

Tigist Shewarega Hussen (academic, University of Western Cape) also spoke about the movement #rapemustfall that was started in the context of the #feesmustfall campaign in South Africa (October 2015). As she explained, the broader movement was for the reduction of fees for higher education, while #rapemustfall, as a subcategory or a sub-movement, is about the culture of sexual assault in college campuses. "What

happened was that as part of the original movement #feesmustfall 'they' started calling and naming alleged rapists. They also circulated a list and people did name 'rapists'." She added how several feminists felt that this was a form of justice because the conventional legal system had failed to secure any reparations for the women who had been raped and the harm that they had faced. "People are taking the system in their hands and creating an informal justice system. But the problem is that these people are not convicted as rapists and being labeled as that without being 'found guilty' was difficult. I found myself troubled as well." From her perspective there is violence occasioned by naming and shaming as well.

Elena felt that responses to online GBV and NCII were embedded themselves in heteronormativity which did not take into account that some of these were the practices of minors. All these actions are punitive and reactive, not proactive. Seemingly there is restorative justice when the offender is punished, but do we move towards a more just society, especially when online GBV and particularly NCII is a wrong that keeps recurring? Further, the material is shared, everyone wants to see the offending material and it spreads amongst people easily. This also indicates that even if platforms such as Google, Facebook and others remove such material, "fingerprint" it and do not allow it to be shared, is it going to be pushed into the dark web?

Kalayni pointed out something that Horacio had already discussed. That violence is often organised, but violations are treated as individual cases. She also shared an instance from India where the power of fake news is also evident – when a manufactured image of woman being raped by five Muslim men, led to mass lynching of Muslim men in Bangalore.

Ruth said that we have to also think in terms of moving forward on how to further unpack questions around online GBV (since it is one area where there has been research). She shared that in her own country (Kenya), class is also a determinant of online GBV in terms of the nature of public reaction, support networks, and who is deserving of such support. "If you are middle class, cis-gender and live in Nairobi, and if trolls come after you, then you'll be worthy of support. But if you're trans, binary, queer, if it extends beyond the respectability politics of sexual liberation and what being woke means, then perhaps you won't get the same support." Ruth said that we need to be wary of creating structures that reinforce existing hierarchy of power.

In response to how online GBV overwhelms other issues, Jac said that the violations that take place online need to be expressed, before we can move on. Then we can move on to what pleasure looks like: Whose pleasure? What kind of bodies? Where is the paradigm? Safia also shared that there are spaces for expressions around sexuality especially for queer people that allow for navigating pleasure in a safe way online.

## **Key outputs and decisions**

- Care should be taken to not allow online GBV to dominate the scope of the thematic area of embodiment
- Technological, corporate and business solutions to online GBV, platforms, intermediaries and their responsibility
- To look also at trans, gender non-binary, gender non conforming people and the kinds of online GBV and the continuum of onground and online violence
- Movements around masculinity, nationalism, proponents of hate speech, methods of community organising should also be part of the research agenda
- Pleasure needs to be taken on as a research topic, particularly around non-normative bodies and sexuality and expression.

## DAY TWO - 30 SEPTEMBER: SHARE

### Expected outcomes:

- Reflect on issues, praxes, challenges that we deal with as feminist researchers in our specific contexts
- Discuss priority issue for a feminist research for the two to three years
- Explore key strategies in integrating feminist perspective in current ICT research

### Sessions

- Welcome back. Eyes and ears report back
- Agenda for the day
- Mapping the gender and technology field - continuation from the day 1: Movement building
- Pecha Kucha presentations by participants (Participants have been asked to prepare three slides with images or illustrations that illustrates: 1) What gets you excited/curious about the work? 2) Why you find it exciting (can be a methodology, topic, approach, priority group)? 3) What challenges are you dealing with or what opportunities are opening up?
- Spectrum game: Who strongly believes that you need a feminist approach to conduct research on digital tech?
- Working groups by five issue areas: access, economy, embodiment and agency, movement building and methodology. Reflecting on the trends and identifying key research topics (Who is this for or about? What is the purpose and use for this research? Why is it important and how does it contribute to change?)
- Reporting back from groups and plenary discussion



[illegible]

Other authors, however, recognise that ICTs offer “powerful” potential for feminist movement building, to transform local struggles for social justice and gender equality into “global rallying cries”. The internet has amplified, complicated, disseminated, produced and disturbed the voices and static we hear and receive. Most of the voices that now shape politics have used ICTs as a tool, medium, space for building movements and protests. This would include Primavera Violeta or the Purple|Feminist Spring in Mexico, Brazil and other parts of Latin America (#niunamenos, etc.), the Nirbhaya movement in India, several movements around gender-based violence in South Africa and Kenya (#menaretrash, #rapemustfall, #bringbackourgirls). There have also been local and global movements where strong voices of women, trans and queer people are present (Black Lives Matter, #feesmustfall), global campaigns like Take Back the Tech with women in several countries wanting to own and use technology on their own terms, and countless other such small and large mobilisations. But there are still huge divides that intersect with gender along the lines of caste, race, ethnicity, ability – to name just a few.

10. Ibid, pg. 1.

## Responses to presentation

Elena responded to this presentation by raising that there could be a lot to be borrowed from social movement studies, especially also from a new generation of scholars working on the nexus between media practices and movements. But she also pointed that the mapping study could look at the work of those in feminist communication and media theories like the work of Margaret Gallagher<sup>11</sup> who is one of the initial authors to start shaping a Global South perspective on gender and media. Similar initiatives like GAMAG (Global Alliance on Media and Gender, United Nations) also could be useful to look at.

Another factor pointed out was that with ICTs, the platforms being used are constantly changing – is it WhatsApp now where previously it was Facebook, and so on. The research methodologies for the platforms also have to change, especially because of differing settings and modes around privacy, encryption and so on.

*“Power is in every relationship, it produces norms about what you can or should do and what makes life meaningful, and the repressive and generative dimensions of power are operating together.”*

Women rarely create their own rules and spaces in relation to such platforms, broadly the ordinary user has little control. Meanwhile many journalists are receiving online threats and many of them don't feel comfortable taking it to the authorities.

Horacio shared that this is the cluster/research bucket, that he felt that there was a conceptual shift in the mapping study and that the repressive dimensions of states and the nature of power was unpacked here. Referring to Michel Foucault's analysis of power, Horacio shared that there were several ideas that still could be discussed here around how power is generative and productive and not merely a force of repression or suppression. “Power is in every relationship, it produces norms about what you can or should do and what makes life meaningful, and the repressive and generative dimensions of power are operating together.”

Tigist pointed to how people have also joined certain social movements online without knowing what they really were. But should we assess the impact of movements by looking at what changes the movement has inspired? Do we need online movements especially to create networks of transnational feminism and solidarity? Caitlin also said that we need to focus on building coalitions online, networks of researchers and so on – and not just movement building.

In relation to the experiences of women speaking out about violence in parts of Latin America, Patricia Pena shared that women doing this also help to build the movement, but that perhaps for many of these women who do share accounts of sexual violence and assault, contributing to the momentum of the movement should not be the end of their actions. Kalayni pointed to the fact that a lot of what happens with movements, in terms of critiques, responses and how they are held together, happen in underground spaces, or in other languages that are not accessible to the mainstream. An instance she shared was that of critiques of diaspora of Iranian women.

11. Gallagher, M. (2003). *Feminist Media Perspectives. A companion to Media Studies*. Malden (USA): Blackwell Publishing Ltd.



Ruth shared that it is sad to see that the students who are at the forefront of movements online, are often still facing difficult conditions, but have been fetishised as heroes and fighters by others, especially online. Or conversely that there are popular hashtags that speak only to the conditions for middle class women in the cities but have no connection to others. She said, “There is a lot being said about who gets to be online, and who gets to produce the content.”

There are also ways in which the global media validates movements online, and how that relates to the impact that it has. This was brought up in particular by Patricia. Tigist shared that she felt that different criteria have to be applied to assess movements online and onground. What you do online as an individual can be disruptive and lead to the sharing of similar experiences, and that gives validity. While onground/offline, there is often the need for the person speaking to already have legitimacy in relation to the movement.

Namita pointed out that there are a variety of movements online, including those that we don’t necessarily agree with.

### *“The hashtag has become a signifier of a street protest”*

Jac said that the hashtag has become a signifier of a street protest. What we actually see to be visible of a movement is the hashtag – how many people use it based on social media analytics. She pointed to the dangers of using corporate tools of social media analytics in relation to movements. There are also questions of who owns the infrastructure online, how profit is made from hashtags, how companies capitalise on online movements and us using hashtags. Jac also shared how the right wing has moved away from online hashtags to using emoticons, and so are the feminists. “Online it’s less about bodies and more about language.” She also suggested that scale is difficult to assess and easy to lie about online.

In relation to unique modes of online movements, Namita shared about the innovative use of holograms to protest in Spain against the repression of the rights of people to protest and collect in a public space.<sup>12</sup> She advised that some of these tools are difficult to imagine as being used in a Global South country.

Jac said that we have to unpack social issues and that with previous work around media, the first stage of analysis was to determine media ownership, but similar research has not been done on social media impact on multiple layers.

### **Key output decisions**

- Movements of all kind need to be analysed, including movements around masculinity, hate speech, alt-right, right wing and other such “gatherings” online; their modes and strategies, of pulling together and forming community
- How do platforms and forums differ as spaces for organising; how do they “capitalise” or make profit from the visible and apparent signs of movements, like hashtags
- How do we research new and private online forums (WhatsApp, Telegram), the dark web, and questions around methodologies were raised
- Landscape of ownership of digital platforms and tools needs to be researched.

12. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3038317/The-world-s-HOLOGRAM-protest-Thousands-join-virtual-march-Spain-against-law-banning-demonstrations-outside-government-buildings.html>

## SHARING OF INTERESTS, CHALLENGES, METHODOLOGIES IN THE FIELD OF RESEARCH IN GENDER AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Participants were informed a week before the expert group meeting about the format for sharing their work. The format was chosen to allow for a sharing of their work, but especially in terms of shared excitements and challenges. Each They were asked to prepare three slides with images or illustrations that show:

- What gets you excited/curious about the work?
- Why do you find it exciting (can be a methodology, topic, approach, priority group)?
- What challenges are you dealing with or what opportunities are opening up?

Each presentation would get three minutes, one minute per slide, to present their work. The participants were grouped as per their regions so as to allow for a rounded discussion of issues.

There was sharing of interests, challenges, methodologies in the field of research in gender and digital technology

### Latin America

Patricia shared that the feminist approach was particularly exciting for her in terms of her research and how to build knowledge from this base. Her work dealt specifically with women who are entrepreneurs.

Bruna shared about how she did a project with a house for trans people, and she had gone there to do a radio workshop. She shared that she ended up researching there for a year, and one of the purposes for the research was so that the group could secure extra funding. Another workshop she had done that excited her was with indigenous women on sound editing, and the purpose here was so they can have their web radio.

Catalina shared her research on domestic workers and their use of the internet. She also shared that her interest was also in the area of creativity and play in relation to research methodology. She said that we often go into a research project or a field with a lot of assumptions that are overturned. But we also have to work with the idea that our research has to be turned into policy recommendations.

Horacio shared one of his research projects on a social movement online that used the hashtag #UERJRESIE, and was a protest against the cutbacks in funds for public education. He also said that what he found particularly exciting is working in collaboration with people. In another project, Horacio worked with his students on rising moral conservatism within the political right movement in Brazil. Here his interest was in the discourses by the rightwing street mobilisations, in particular how gender is embedded within the moral panic as well.

Catalina, who is from Latin America but is currently working in India, also shared her experience working with Latin American women. Her interest is also in thinking differently/ creatively especially in relation to research methodology. Her ideas are to centre a research project around creating, asking, doing, thinking, and to create an experience. Her work in India was to work with a rural community where she created, in collaboration with a group of women, the intimate narratives of these women.

## Discussion

In the discussion that followed this series of presentations, everyone shared that it was difficult to respond effectively because of the short nature of the presentations. Jac said that this was just to give each other a taste or introduction to each other's work and that we hope that a lot of conversations would also spill into the break.

In relation to games and creative methodologies Jac talked about the Take Back the Tech game that gamifies the ways in which people can respond to online GBV ranging from legal tools, platform responses and support network. In response Catalina shared further how the project she had done with IT for Change involved a game structure using sets, maps and other tools to help people navigate through different spaces in their everyday setting, setting up challenges.

## Africa

Tigist talked about how she researched the role of social media, political participation and movements, specifically in the case of #feesmustfall in South Africa. She shared that her methodology is feminist multi-sited ethnography. The movement #feesmustfall began in 2015 and is one of the biggest catalysts on the question of both cost of education but also sexual assault within universities and institutions with the hashtag #rapemustfall. Tigist shared that her research in particular looks at #rapemustfall. She also spoke here of the violence both within and produced by the movement itself.

When it started it was about the fees #FeesMustFall, then #EndOutsourcing (labour exploitation- cleaners in the institution) and #Shackville (access to campus residence for black students), #BringBackOurCafes and #PatriarchyMustFall, #RapeMustFall, #Chapter212, #ReferenceList (how the women use it to create their own justice because they are not being taken seriously) and #IAmOneInThree.

Chenai Chair shared her work as a communication researcher for Research ICT Africa (RIA). What RIA does is to build evidence for ICT policymaking in Africa, and there is a specific need felt for evidence that is open to the public and accessible to everyone. This base of research is needed to start a conversation. She shared that what excites her in particular is to talk about the work to the feminist and tech communities. She shared also her personal reasons rooted in a love for technology, and also of being a Zimbabwean migrant in South Africa and the role it plays in her own life. What she found most challenging was to be able to answer the questions – for whom am I producing, or what, for where and why?

Ruth shared that she does research on online gender-based violence, environmental justice, the kind of violence Kenyan women face, and tries to bring a class perspective to it. She is interested in how people work with others, how they work out their internal contradictions and their understanding of their positionality in the world. She shared that some of the contradictions that seem obvious to her is that this research around gender and digital technology also has to address the exploitative conditions of labour in factories in South East Asia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Ruth raised the question, "Across the whole ICT chain, what is the possibility of greater movement building, with concrete analysis of the labour regime in particular?"

Safia Khan is a self-described data nerd. She shared her particular interest in a quantitative approach to gender and digital technology. She shared studies that looked at data from 11 countries showing that women use less ICT than men. When descriptive data is collected

alongside it shows that rather than gender, what is evident is the urban-rural difference. She shared that such studies show that the likelihood of a person using ICT is not affected by sex. What gender-based data studies mask are inequalities and especially income inequality. We need to talk about equalising factors such as income to address the inequality in use of ICTs. Mobile ownership especially is the technology that will bridge the access and digital divide. In terms of challenges of such research, Safia shared about convincing government especially around policy, and understanding people's motivations.

## **Discussion**

In response to this, Tigist spoke about her struggles with methodology. She said that she realised that she had a lot of data and that this was collected without having a single conversation with any women, since so many had shared their stories under the hashtag of #rapemustfall. She said that she actually approached the ethics committee in relation to her quandary about this.

The person from Middle East North Africa shared a few specific dilemmas around research methodology, particularly how to do research that does not reproduce hierarchies and do epistemic violence in the form of knowledge production about people, in which people themselves have not much choice or role in what is said about them; how to document struggles without appropriating voices; how to figure out within our practice of politics and research and how to be allies.

## **Asia and Europe**

Caitlin works for the Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance which is now ten years old. She spoke of the two programmes that primarily focused on capacity building. Caitlyn spoke about building analytical tools and concepts to get at the complex problems and intersectional issues which range from the subversive, North Korea and South Korea, Singapore, Syrian refugees in Greece and the Netherlands. The centre is also interested in building the field of gender and technology. The centre specifically looks at different models of mentorship and debates with existing scholars who aren't necessarily focused on gender.

Jinnie shared information about the Fembot Collective. She spoke about how women academics are entrenched in a system that no longer serves our needs, if indeed it ever did. This led to Fembot Collective holding events around hacking academia and feminism, to move beyond academia and its power flow, about ideas around publication which in particular are addressed by ADA: A Journal of Gender, New Media and Technology. The collective is open to artists and activists. At this point Fembot seeks to move beyond boundaries based on the Western academia, and to extend beyond the West.

Elena Pavan is an academic working on movements in particular. She is an academic but a strong supporter of using the knowledge produced without abusing the movement by appropriating the knowledge. "Who tends to talk to whom, I trace this network everywhere. How it has evolved over time, how people appropriate strategically."

Becky, who works with the Institute of Development Studies, said her research is concerned with automation and its impact on women's work. She said that one of the findings of her research was that workers who perceive themselves at risk of automation are more likely to vote for Trump. She also shared that there is not much research in this field and thus there is a chance to shape it with a feminist agenda, specifically to come up with a new research agenda – what is a feminist digital economy? To answer from a feminist perspective what, at the present moment, needs critical examination of what digital skills will matter in future.

## Discussion

In the discussions after the presentations a few important questions were raised. In particular there was a discussion of research methodology and how all research can contribute back to the “subjects” or “informants” for the research, in particular marginalised populations.

In response to the question around digital economies, Ruth said that many workers around the world are in precarious situations with the possibility of losing their jobs. Becky Faith also connected the context of precarious labour in the United Kingdom to larger political shifts such as Brexit.

Ruhiya and Tigist raised questions about what impact social movements have. Tigist added that social movements online have actually, in spite of amplifying voices and having a fairly large presence online, not achieved much in terms of concrete impact. #feesmustfall did not lead to a reduction of the fees, the incidence of rape and assault cases in universities has not dropped, according to Tigist, in spite of #rapemustfall. Tigist said that this question was also asked from the person who started the hashtag – why did the movement fail even though on social media it was highly popular? And the response was that the system is failing, not the movement, that the people in power are not listening to the voices of those protesting. The only space they have is the space online, and the Parliament is not available for such people. South Africans went naked for every day for weeks, what more do you need to see? Tigist said that the failures or the lack of impact of such movements are not about the movement themselves, but how the current political and social systems react and respond to it, and this includes how we as individuals and a society respond as well.

Jac said that with the study of movements, it is likely that we can see only one piece of it and think that this the whole. Hashtag activism is not just about who starts it and who comes after. Social media analytics and tools allow you too see the breadth of the movement in this instance, but still have their limitations. The questions that remain are: what do you consider success; is it about the number of people participating or is it about social change; is it about building public pressure around an issue or ensuring active participation by many. She pointed out how there is a paradox when people understand the language of struggles and movements taking place in the United States of America, but don't connect or know enough about indigenous women's struggles in their own country or context. There is also a globalisation of struggles taking place that is letting people disengage from local struggles.

Elena agreed that movement outcome is the hardest to measure but that there are critical things that need to be discussed as well including accountability of and within a movement. Impact can sometimes be about policy of the state, or something smaller like asking for the cancellation of a particular TV show. There are varied responses from people around gender issues. Change is a process. Hashtag is a media practice, it's not a movement in itself. Reiterating what Jac had said earlier about a hashtag signifying a street protest, Elena also said that a hashtag is no more or no less than a street demonstration. It is a tactic. We should demand less of online mobilisation because it cannot fix everything.

Patricia also joined the discussion on impact of movements and said that the question to ask is why we want to know about impact. What is the influence being sought and who is the impact for? Fighting or protesting is different depending on context and it's also about

communication, strategy and politics. Bruna also talked about a social movement that shared stories of harassment in schools and said that it did get a lot of people involved.

Elena shared that the conversation around digital activism is happening in different spaces and we can attempt to pull together these different conversations or try to learn from them. Jac wrapped up this discussion that arose from people's sharing of their work and challenges. She said it was interesting to see such diverse methodologies are being used around building knowledge and doing research. It was also felt that we needed to have a deeper dive into the question of what the difference between doing feminist analysis and using a gender lens for analysis is. This then led to the next session.

## GENDER ANALYSIS VERSUS FEMINIST ANALYSIS

*Spectrogram by Jac followed by discussion*

The spectrogram is a methodology that involves asking a question and asking people to arrange themselves along a line depending on how strongly they agree or disagree with the question. They are then asked to explain why they chose the position that they did. This is particularly helpful in instances when a question does not have a clear answer for most people, but yet many people are invested in different responses to the question. The question here was: **Who strongly believes that you need a feminist approach to conduct research on digital tech?**

Chenai spoke about how she would like to use the word feminism, but finds that it often alienates people who are partners in the research project, but doing gender analysis or calling it gender analysis allows her to do the same work. Jac asked her whether she feels that this allows her to look at the power imbalances between men and women.

The person from MENA said that even though the word might not be used everywhere, there's an understanding that everything we do is from the feminist perspective.

Jac asked the group whether actually gender is more than just about the difference between men and women. Horacio said, in his opinion, it is. He said that it can be research on the production of regulations around sex and gender. It's not only about who, it is also about regulations and power.

Caitlin said that in feminist research she would be seeking to dismantle patriarchy and challenge gender norms. So feminist research is about the larger politics of change rather than simply a project with a gender lens, or one that uses or incorporates gender analysis. It is about understanding and examining the structures and layers of power and how it works.

***"Feminist research is about a larger politics of change."***

Becky Faith said that in her years of being in the field of academia, she has found that gender could become more like a tick box option, to ensure that the research covers that. But for her it is essential to do more than tick the right box, but to actually do feminist research.

Ruth shared that she thinks of herself as a feminist activist, and not a gender activist and that this difference is ideological. Feminist research (or perspective/standpoint) is specifically anti-patriarchy, and it goes beyond the gender and the individual level. It is also anti-capitalist. She said that as a black woman she feels it extends to the racial politics and



decolonisation. Gender analysis or work to address the gender inequity is also done by the government and then it can be devoid of any ideology or politics.

Catalna Alzate said that it is problematic to look only at gender, there is also class and caste. She shared how her entry into a context would alter power dynamics, so what matters to feminist analysis is also one's own location or positionality, and reflexivity of the researcher matters.

Jac summarised some of these points saying that feminist analysis takes into account more complex realities, structural power imbalances, the history of inequity and our collective stake in the future.

Jac broadened the spectogram exercise by asking: **What different questions would you ask if you are doing a feminist research, if you're doing a research on gender?**

Caitlin said that we seem to be thinking of gender as analytical and not as political or apolitical. But according to her, if you're looking at gender, you're already political, you're stating that gender matters, there's already a certain political aspect to it. The questions we would be asking would be of equality and emancipation.

Safia said that a gendered approach acknowledges the difficulties and complexities. There is a reductionist approach in government, where it is reduced to women and men. But this does not take into account able-bodiedness. Jinnie Chae said that we should think about ethics in the process of our research and think about the use of media and technology to support each other's work. In particular she pointed to how automation is producing dehumanisation in relationships, shifts in labour and precarity.

***"Feminist research is about not seeing people as informants or subjects of research, but as participants and part of building knowledge, since they are the experts on their own lives. This is why a politics of reflexivity is built into feminist analysis."***

Feminist analysis looks, in particular, at human relations. The emphasis is on embodied and lived experiences thus the entry point into the field of gender and digital technology would be through the human/person and not through the technology. Tigist reiterated this in a different way saying that in feminist analysis we do not position ourselves as an expert. Feminist research is about not seeing people as informants or subjects of research, but as participants and part of building knowledge, since they are the experts on their own lives. This is why a politics of reflexivity is built into feminist analysis. The person from MENA said that within their own practice they have replaced the concept of knowledge building with knowledge archiving, because knowledge is already there in practices, utterances and behaviour and research is merely a process of archiving it.

Catalna Alzate said that feminist analysis dislodges easy binaries – that of man and woman, but also of research and action. The researcher must acknowledge that the process and project of research is an intervention in someone else's life and has political implications.

Chenai raised the question that if all this is true for the work that they do, but the ways in which it is described does not include the word feminist, then does that mean that it is not feminist analysis or feminist research praxis. One of the responses was that feminism

does not police the boundaries of the discipline or praxis in that sense, that these are tools that are available for all to use in their research and they also come from other disciplines. Bruna pointed out that there are different kinds of feminisms, some that critique capitalism (socialist feminism) and many branches of feminism that do not.

Jac said that there sometimes isn't such a clear difference in approach between feminist analysis and gender based analysis. But **the process of thinking of ethics, reflexivity, positionality, process of research does begin from day one**. She acknowledged that there is a risk to saying feminist, and it is challenging in some contexts – such as policy negotiations with the government or even some civil society spaces. Using the f-word creates an explicit set of values.

In summary it was found that feminist analysis has the following characteristics, some of which are shared with projects that do gender based analysis, but stating/using **feminism makes explicit these shared set of values**.

- Feminist analysis addresses differences around gender, but also power and regulation around sex and gender.
- Feminist research is about a larger politics of change rather than a project with a gender lens or one that uses or incorporates gender analysis. It is about understanding and examining the structures and layers of power and how they work.
- Looking at gender as more than a tick box in relation to development discourse.
- The difference between feminist research and research that looks at gender difference is ideological. Feminist research (or perspective/standpoint) is specifically anti-patriarchy goes beyond the gender and the individual level, and it is also anti-capitalist, extending to the racial politics and decolonisation.
- Feminist analysis seems to take into account more complex realities, structural power imbalances, the history of inequity, and our collective stake in the future.
- Feminist analysis is also about one's own location or positionality, and reflexivity, ethics of the researcher and the process of research matter.
- In feminist analysis we do not position ourselves as experts. Feminist research is about not seeing people as informants or subjects of research, but as participants and part of building knowledge, since they are the expert on their own lives. Knowledge is already there in practices, utterances and behaviour and research is merely a process of archiving it.
- Feminist analysis dislodges easy binaries – that of man and woman, but also of research and action. The researcher must acknowledge that the process and project of research is an intervention in someone else's life and has political implications.
- Having said that, there are different kinds of feminisms – for instance those that participate in capitalism and free market economies and those that have a vehement critique of it.
- Feminist research practices require thinking of ethics, reflexivity, positionality, methodology, process and outcome of research, the politics of knowledge.

## MAPPING AND SUMMARY OF AREAS

*Led by Jac*

Jac led this discussion giving a macro perspective of what has been talked about, what has been raised, what the critical issues and gaps are and where some work is happening.

Yellow: research exists

Ice blue: emerging areas, more potential research

Green: not enough research



## **Access**

In relation to access, Jac pointed to the emerging work happening around social and cultural norms and barriers for women to access ICTs. There is some work around disability, but not enough from the lens of gender. What is important to note is the growing importance of the human rights framework in relation to access which will ensure a framing that is more political than one that is led largely by states and corporate entities and will ensure meaningful and substantial access that can lead to the fulfilment of human rights.

Jac also pointed out that there is a definite need for more data to understand access, sex or gender disaggregated data in particular but also other kinds of data. There is also a question of the links between access and surveillance, increasing access is also enabling surveillance over a larger population. This is particularly important in relation to indigenous people and marginalised communities.

Power dynamics in relation to public points of access (through the state) and private players has been unpacked to a certain extent, but community and local networks and power dynamics at play are not yet a topic of research. Access has clear links to other areas including through education to economy and labour, and through surveillance and violence to embodiment.

## **Economy and labour**

Jac highlighted that there is a need within feminist research to look at and link structural analysis and the body – focus on one sometimes makes the other disappear. There has been increasing attention to the link between climate change and ICTs, but further questions around this might have to be asked. There is also the possibility of looking at the feminist commons. This mindmap links to questions around feminist infrastructure and commons as separate from the FOSS (free and open source software) as a separate category on its own.

There are also other loci where changes and shifts in economy are taking place, including bilateral trade agreements, intellectual property and the commons, and the women's movement is also already active in some of these spaces. Ruth also said that movements go beyond the public/private dichotomy and that rethinking around the commons is particularly interesting. Jac pointed out that conversations around economy also have to be about sustainability, what kind of technology supports transformation, how we complicate the notion of empowerment, and also how we place it within the context of the neo-liberal economy.

## **Embodiment**

On embodiment, there's a lot of work around GBV, non-consensual sharing of images and internet intermediary liability. What was raised was that we need to look at non-normative bodies that are affected by online GBV, to broaden and problematise the victim. There is a need to look at violence and harassment, both in terms of how it is organised and who it impacts and affects as well as how it is experienced and perpetuated.

Ruhiya raised questions on whether there is research or even activism that looks at how to counter online harassment and online violence beyond legal or quasi legal mechanisms.

Jac said that there are strategies that are being talked about in the digital security context and how they needed to be shared with people who are being attacked rather than shared as general knowledge. Elena opened up the question here of how technical protocols (internet grammar) can address the problem of online GBV (bots that respond to harassment, for instance). Digital security also looks at questions of self care and physical defence as intrinsically linked to cybersecurity – these are all in the domain of practices, and not so much in research.

There are also shifts in the use of technology, such as Facebook being able to track certain images and the sharing of those images. Jac pointed out that the technology was already being used by Interpol to track child pornography. Horacio talked about existing work on people whose work it is to identify and track child pornography. Jac said that there is a lot of expertise in this room among the participants at the expert group meeting to deepen the research when it comes to online gender-based violence but clearly not enough on pleasure.

Sex, sexuality, some work done in terms of apps, experiential learning and narrative building are the spaces where there is some work on pleasure. We're always coming into technology from the perspective of harm but another question we should ask is what is sexual citizenship?

Jac also included in her mapping that there is emerging research on datafication, but not so much about its impact on specific bodies, and more about datafication in relation to populations.

Becky suggested that we make a collective exercise of building a/many bibliography, and Jac noted that those areas marked in yellow and blue in the mind maps are those that already have research, the ones in green are emerging areas.

## **Movement building**

Jac said that within movements, gender and digital technology there is a lot of awareness and experience in the field of internet governance but we should also be looking at the questions around participation and decision making that we could be asking.

Ruhiya raised the point that part of raising voices is about insecurities that are experienced at a personal level. Another dimension that Jac pointed to is that some of these issues are raised – for instance, digital security in relation to movements is a hot topic – but within that the specific reference to what women particularly face is not quite as clear. In the Internet Governance Forum the struggle to establish a specific forum for gender clashes with sessions on human rights. Jac explained that the four pillars of internet governance are human, technology, development and policy/governance. Gender and human rights fall within the human/civil society pillar. Is there enough research on whether the multistakeholder approach is actually working? Ruhiya suggested looking at the decision makers here to see whether that explains why gender is not being privileged in internet governance spaces. Chenai raised a question on what gender issues are considered relevant in internet governance spaces – whether it is online GBV, women's participation, sexuality and pornography or access and development.

Elena brought in traditional mainstream media as well here, where subjects like women in the news and women in media are relatively more researched. Jac said that more work can be done in terms of discursive change. Jac emphasised that an emerging area is around technology infrastructure and movement. What is the role of technology in supporting structural change and what is the pace? Related questions that need to be

asked are around transnational solidarity, the political economy of infrastructure, and bringing up feminism in the context of social movements – is it disruptive, subversive or just not playing along?

Jac pointed out that the map shows there has been work and research on online GBV, accountability and governance. There is related work on infrastructure, cybersecurity and the impact of biopower and this lies between embodiment and movements.

## **Methodology**

An additional area is around ethics and accountability in research, particularly feminist research. A related area that was raised at the expert group meeting was the politics and practice of mentoring. Along with research ethics, there is the question of how change or impact is measured. Are we challenging the development framework or integrating other methods into it? What about rigorous practices in fields of art – can these be included in the mapping of research and work being done around gender and digital technology? Can research be made part of the political process, as opposed to separate from it?

Another emerging area and underlying concern that emerged from the mapping that Jac did was that there is some, but not enough, research happening on gender expression, to include transgender, gender non conforming and non binary people. There is research happening but not enough in the Global South perhaps.

Elena responded to the questions of ethics and accountability, saying that research can be essential, even a tool, for the movement. Caitlin Bentley centered questions around women's emancipation saying that this remains an essential project for the work/research we do. Horacio also said that we need to bring back questions of pleasure and particularly how it is regulated if we are to understand power better.

## **WORKING GROUP AND PLENARY DISCUSSIONS**

Participants gathered to have group discussions to unpack the four thematic areas. One additional area that was included was that of research methodology since the discussions on feminist analysis in particular located that research methodology is the locus and praxis of feminism, in relation to the "subjects" of the research and the location of the researcher.

Started with reflection and then group broke up for further brainstorming on the five topics: methodology, access, economy and labour, embodiment and agency, and participation and governance.

- Who is this for or about?
- What is the purpose and use for this research?
- Why is it important and how does it contribute to change?
- For the next three years, what is absolutely critical to know?

All groups were given the mind maps to help them think through this. In the morning session of Day Three, the same themes were discussed again. Since the discussion following each presentation took place largely on Day Three, these are being grouped together here for ease of reading in this report.

## ***Movement building***

*Presented by Elena, Horacio, Patricia*

- We need to contextualise some of the parameters of the struggle in relation to gender (and sexuality) that are unchanged and historical inequality is what we are still trying to address. We're finding new ways through technology, but are still dependent on the basic provision of access and this returns us to looking at policy reform.
- How importance and relevance of movements is shifting, how the feminist movement can learn from and lean on technologies, how and why we should also be looking at counter movements.
- On challenges, on appropriating technological infrastructure, how does it become part of your strategy? For feminist movement builders to understand that technology is pervasive in this age.
- On infrastructure of technology, how does the movement approach it critically, programming and coding according to the feminist view, and, while this is right now a relatively marginal question it is important. How do we develop coding as part of the movement to bring the movement inside technology and the infrastructure?
- From the perspective of movements against inequality and injustice, Elena emphasised that they should be studied from within and work towards a common toolkit that can be replicated, that often it is hard to build movements from scratch but easier to think of articulations and rights that are already to some extent recognised, and to organise around those.
- Horacio said that movement building is a misnomer of sorts because it is not that we build movements as much as there is context around you that pushes towards people organising or becoming a movement. When looking at other movements, for instance homophobic discourse, it is organised around the notion of protecting your children. What forms a movement or cause, how do they move online and offline, how do they form strategies and communities? One thing we could learn perhaps is to destabilise this dichotomy of online and onground/offline as the two things are not separated but they are in communication. The actuality is what makes every movement hybrid.
- In terms of communication and networks, some of the topics raised in relation to building movements, were: how do we network ourselves, tools for building alliance that is grounded in local struggles and are we thinking global and forgetting the local.
- Sustainability: preaching to the converted is important, but new persons, communities and experiences are also fundamental, and we need local case studies. Sustainability would also involve re-imagining the role of technology.
- How to build movements towards impacting policy.

## **Questions and discussion**

In relation to the question of looking at counter movements, Chenai suggested that we should perhaps look at defining and nuancing ideas around hate speech.

Ruth also contextualised this idea of turning towards human rights and law, saying that it has to be context dependent. For instance, queer doesn't exist in human rights and constitution, and even gay rights are not available in all countries and contexts. There is, therefore, a need for building movements and discourse more creatively and there has to be some other place to start other than the law.

Kalayni said that in different contexts, we anchor our critiques differently. Sometimes we rely on articulations in international law as well. Having a larger perspective around movement building would allow us to see the different ways in which people are asserting their claims, the different languages and modes they use or have to use.

## **Access**

*Chenai and Bruna Zanolli led the presentation*

- Questions that we need to ask in relation to access also include questions of power since access is delivered through the state and its apparatus.
- Who are the key players in the provision of access (and this also relates to questions of surveillance by the state and corporate players here, what kind of traffic related data is recorded)? What are the laws, regulations and policy measures on access? Who are the key actors who are allowed into the space where decisions are made? At the local level is the community ever actually consulted?
- Since access is such a broad area and relates to other facets, the group made the decision to narrow it down.
- The decision was made to look specifically at the efficacy, the questions, the context of feminist infrastructure and services. Are they important in the bigger picture? Are they more resilient? Do they allow for measures for counter surveillance by state, corporates (and also perhaps those known to a person who could be responsible for online harassment, violence, etc.) The interest in feminist services and infrastructure is also important because it bridges the gap between technology, violence, community and feminist principles. I.e. focus on the implementation of community networks and different models of such networks
- In particular this form of infrastructure as a mode of providing access would work against hegemonic state, institutional and patriarchal power, support movements on the ground, and it would empower through access.
- As a research question in relation to access, Chenai stressed that the group that discussed it found this an interesting and alternative way to look at access, that addresses some of the questions raised on the first day in relation to the language of access (and its dissonance with feminist understandings) and this provided a way to look at both access and power.
- The audience of the research on the efficacy of community networks, in particular feminist infrastructure, would be community organisations, policy makers, civil society, academia, government and, most importantly, the community itself
- Why? To deepen feminist approaches, explore communication technology
- How would that contribute to change? With more women participating in technical roles and increased community ownership over ICTs,

## **Questions and discussion**

Elena asked the question of how one defines community networks and community ownership, how it came to be and what actual form it takes. Caitlin responded to this by saying that perhaps one way to define them is that the community decides how the resources of the community are used as opposed to external players. She also shared that such projects are often not so much invested in the philosophy or even research questions around community networks, but are interested in the pragmatics. Kalyani shared the examples of community radio projects in India, and so did Bruna about radio in Brazil.

Tigist shared that in her experience of all community network projects, even ones that are not named or described as feminist or women-led, the women in the community who are the ones holding everything together, maintaining equipment, and keeping it functional (research on Zenzeleni network). Men are not interested in household stuff and the equipment is usually inside the house so it is the women who would know it's not working and have some communication with the operator. Having a feminist perspective and study is actually much more important in understanding what a community network is, any community network.

Jac also said that the common experience of such networks and centres is that more often than not women are managing the money and running things, but the problem is the governance structure and whether they are part of it or get to make decisions. That's why it's important to frame community networks and local networks from a feminist perspective

### ***Embodiment***

*Presented by Mariana, Jenny, Katerina*

- Online GBV: How do you define who is the victim? How do you recover from harm and what do you take into consideration? How cases of online violence are addressed in the judicial system and media coverage based on class and privilege. Mariana emphasised that often depending on the privilege and standpoint of research, the question of how we relate to the "victim" will come up.
- Mariana emphasise this as the basis on which solutions that are meant to deal with online GBV are suggested. These solutions range for accessing justice for the person who is victimised and these include counter speech, complaint mechanisms, filing cases with police and fighting in court, and so on. But in cases of counter speech, for instance, the onus is placed back on the person and assumes that they have access and the power to communicate on an equal field which may not be the case. Here Mariana also emphasised the need for defining the terms we use in relation to online GBV and NCII.
- Jenny spoke about datafication and data studies in relation to embodiment as was discussed in the group. She said that she would look at what is happening outside the women's movement and how we can draw from other fields. Data is a new tool of state repression. What is the implication of datafication specifically of non-normative bodies, especially considering the male, dominant race/caste person is the norm. Jenny also shared how the group discussed that we need to develop feminist algorithms and spaces.
- In relation to embodiment, the group also discussed the possibilities of research around pleasure. This was not limited to the usual terrains around of sexuality and pornography, but also about how we create safe spaces to respond to reality which could be unsafe. Rather than understand digital security only through the prism of safety and protection (both online and onground/offline) we could take a pleasure approach. What does it mean and how is it going to change the experience online?
- Katerina added that one of the struggles they had in the group in relation to datafication and embodiment was to look at algorithms and algorithmic decision making. There is enough research to show that technology is not a (gender) neutral space, neither are algorithms. These algorithms reflect the biases in society, even if they are basically the functions of code, mathematics and technology. Can we look at the questions around algorithms from a feminist perspective, to balance or correct the biases that algorithms are based on? We need to understand what impacts algorithms are having particularly in terms of discrimination of marginalised communities and around gender. The big problem here is that of methodology since algorithms are usually protected knowledge (corporate secrets) so how do we come up with ways to research the ways in which algorithms work?
- To bring together questions around technology and embodiment, pleasure and algorithms, the group asked whether it is possible to answer what feminist algorithms would look like. Here, especially, the idea of a research hackathon was suggested to involve coders and programmers in these conversations as well and to have the intersection of various disciplines to work together on specific problems, research themes or areas. An example of how an algorithm (or the biases embedded in algorithms) works is to determine migrants as non-productive bodies in an economy, more of a cultural stereotype than an assumption that is borne out in reality.
- The need for public data on algorithms was also discussed, without which it is a



difficult topic to explore and particularly to point to inherent biases. But at the same time it is unlikely that they will not be used in the future. The need for multiple stakeholders doing this research with comparative research from Global North and South was stressed. An example shared was that of airports or hospitals as sites where a lot of information is shared, areas regarding health, maternity, reproductive health and mental health. What sort of information and data is available?

- Pleasure: How do you think about security from a pleasure point of view? Security makes yourself small, pleasure is expansive. Security tools and apps and pleasure tools and apps, what do you get at the end of it? Snapchat is designed with this in mind
- Space, interaction, pleasure and productivity. Research hackathon around pleasure, design and data – geek out about design principles and produce interesting projects and research
- Politics of aesthetic, the reason why Mac is dominant and open access has low take (not feminist enough), is that we don't want to sacrifice pleasure to practise our politics. There is no reason why we cannot run open access networks with creativity and pleasure as part of the purpose, beyond getting more money. Is the missing piece in the puzzle in the economic development, trying to create an economy that is anti-startup and anti-hipster?

### Questions and discussions

Catalina said that we need to ask for accountability of companies in relation to not just our data but also the algorithms they use. We have an internet and market economy that is closed source, we don't know how the Facebook news feed algorithm works, for instance. The internet is Big Data, it cannot work without it. How algorithms unfold on the internet needs to be understood, we are making assumptions that it is divorced from how human beings usually operate.

Matthew said that there is quite a bit of thinking now about how you can make algorithms more transparent, including lots of other areas where algorithms make decisions in government where it's important. Algorithms are a tool that reflect back on society, but also just a way to take into consideration many, even millions, of variables.

Namita suggested that there is still a missing piece here in the mapping about who owns the data. It may not be the same as elsewhere. She refers to Zeynep Tufekci's research on how data was used to predict voting results in the Obama campaign<sup>13</sup> in the U.S. Another example is that all url shorteners, for instance, store the url that the person puts in and a feminist url shortener from Kefir or Vedata basically does not do that.

Jac also said that these algorithms and the use of data are black boxes protected by corporations and that we need to demonstrate impact and bias. She said she likes the idea of working with feminist data sets that would demonstrate what would happen if algorithms were fashioned differently to take into account a bunch of other variables not usually considered or the dropping of usually important variables.

Ruhiya pointed to a tension inherent in doing feminist analysis, of becoming a ghetto and talking to only yourself. She pointed that if we are so separated (as in the above example of doing work around feminist data sets) then you might lose audiences for the research and make the existing separations worse. There is a need to build bridges with the research and policy work that is taking place.

13. Tufekci, Z. July 2014. Engineering the public: Big data, surveillance and computational politics. The First Monday: Peer reviewed journal on the internet. Volume 19, Number 7. <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/4901/4097>

Ruth said that this a false ambivalence because the existing mainstream builds on the contribution of only white male authors, and so a lot of feminist work engages with this dominant theory and thinkers. She also objects to the use of the word ghetto to characterise this phenomenon.

Jac suggested that what we are trying to do is expansive, not reductionist, to add a principle, not substitute one. The person from MENA said that it is true that women theorising is seen as not important, it is sidelined because the default of male, white theory is seen as applying to the general context and not seen as isolated. This needs to be corrected. Becky suggested that women and feminist academics have started practices of citing and relying largely on each other's work and supporting the work in their own field and by other feminists.

Namita pointed to the fact that feminism is actually a far more mainstreamed concern in some contexts than it used to be, especially in the Global North.

### ***Economy and labour***

*Presented by Becky, Safia, Ruth, Patricia*

- Becky said she felt the need to specifically invent a field of feminist digital economics as the impact of the digital economy on gender, gendered labour, relations and other aspects in society is likely to be huge and there is a need for a feminist perspective and unpacking of these questions.
- Becky shared that the group discussed questions around entrepreneurship, and that there is an existing discourse around women entrepreneurs. But how does this work in the context of postcolonial and neoliberalism, what has been the impact of the projects so far and what can be done to make it more effective?
- Specifically Becky brought up the topic of feminist economics that already look at gendered labour and female unpaid work in the domestic sphere and elsewhere. Rather than talk about the violence of mainstream economics and, within that, the impact on women, perhaps it makes more sense to look at it through the perspective of feminist economics that emphasises the primacy of gendered labour in the setting up of any economy.
- This group also discussed what makes an infrastructure feminist. A related question would be what does a feminist economic platform look like, for example an Airbnb that...works with marginalised persons. Or are those platforms inherently biased against ordinary users and meant to generate profit for companies? People are already organising and using platforms and apps like WhatsApp for their endeavours. What are these methods, how do they work, can they be shared with others?
- To return to the first point, Becky pointed out that the group felt the need to create a field or subdiscipline around feminist digital economics. The internet is a high-cost space for marginalised people with an economic impact in terms of mining, outsourcing, automation, the sharing economy, blockchain, feminist commons and infrastructure, and so on. There is a need to specifically look at these issues from a feminist perspective.
- From this perspective, the issues that were understood as important by the group included understanding labour within neo-liberalism. Becky stressed also looking at decolonisation and to unpack theories of change as they are understood and distributed by various important economic agencies.
- Patricia suggested that this field could also look at funding lines that are coming up, how we build ideas of a feminist digital economy and how we can construct these



values. There are many issues in women in STEM area, what it really means and what change is wanted.

- Ruth stressed the importance of physical infrastructure, and thus the role of the states. The lack of infrastructure is often what makes ecological justice impossible and leads to a cycle of harm. For example, 56% of emissions produced by laptops occurred during the production phase or business models in the extractive industries. If companies were to account for or pay back the costs of climate change and of taking people's land, water and women's labour, a lot of these companies would not exist or would go broke. It's not just the digital infrastructure, it's solidarity across the digital chain, from mining, manufacturing to use, consumption of electricity and so on. The feminist digital economy could be an important mode through which to talk about the cycles in economy, and to acknowledge that the technology we use is embedded in power relations.
- Safia suggested a return to feminist economics and concepts that point to the existence of gendered and unpaid/unacknowledged labour through history (productive vs reproductive labour). Jinnie also added that she was interested in the labour question since currently labour refers largely to paid labour. That refers also to how economy (and economic concepts) are divorced from social realities. She said that we need to expand the notion of economy, thinking also of the labour of care that women are engaged in and to do this without romanticising aspects of domestic work within heteronormativity.
- Relatively new phenomena like automation will impact on gendered labour, also produce shadow work and who will be doing this work.
- Ruth also spoke of the emotional, affective labour done by black women and other women who belong to certain communities and minority groups. She pointed out how digital companies are really exploiting the labour, even the racial component and racial tensions. Because a lot of it is produced by women, it's free. Women are producing things free of charge. Safia extended this by also speaking of appropriation of women's creativity in design (an example of a Ghana-based designer being ripped off by H&M was mentioned).

### **Questions and discussions**

Katerina extended this also to technology tools and devices, and to push companies to produce tools and devices that can be repaired, something difficult to push in a profit-driven economy. This refers also to the general philosophy of free and open source software and how those ideas also fit within and work with notions around feminist economics.

Jac talked about the difficulties of measuring cultural production and the shadow economy, unpaid labour, or affective labour that happens on Facebook. She stated that labour should be described as such, and shadow value if not monetised needs to be quantified in some way. There is also the value that expressions online give in terms of autonomy and mobility, the need to connect our discussions to existing enterprises like that of Creative Commons, and the discourse around piracy, archiving and history.

### **Research methodology**

*Presented by Catalina, Namita, participant from MENA region*

- The recurring question in the discussions since Day 1 has been how we dismantle the power relations in research. What practices, intentions and the position of the researcher have to do with this, in terms of their self awareness of history and location. Questions around who this research is for, and methodologies like participatory action research were also discussed by the group.
- A related point raised was that often research is done within an institution, followed by additional questions of how one relates to such institutions (whether academic, civil

society or even corporate) and whether the practices of the institution be challenged from within. A broader question is that of discourse and history, and whether we are in control of how that history would be written.

- The person from MENA emphasised that we often think of knowledge production as available only for people with formal training (with rigour, methods and so on) but we can we think of alternative methodologies that emphasise that the knowledge is actually outside of such strictly defined silos. For instance, there is an emphasis on written knowledge as opposed to oral histories. A good starting point here would be to look at what research methodologies already address this question and the imbalance between the researcher and the researched, and to see what such feminist and other methodologies of research exist.
- Catalina then again raised the efficacy and the acceptance of such methods of research. Even though participatory action research and feminist methodology are well known, it is not acknowledged often as research, and the output, if it does not fit into quantitative brackets, is not useful for the purposes of change, policy reform, etc. Catalina also suggested that the legitimacy of research methodology is also crucially dependent on documentation and that we should be documenting our methods to share and to establish them.
- We looked at methodology specific to the technology domain, and not only at the internet. Even television is a different object and cultural experience. The need is to question the various binaries, how we conceptualise them, and methodology is our starting point.
- In particular looking at how our methodologies should deal with the difference between online and offline. Various other languages are proposed – online and onground, for instance.
- In relation to methodology, another repeated idea is thow to do intersectionality, and not merely speak it as a tokenistic gesture. Intersectionality has come out often and how you bring it into your process and research. In relation to this, a reading list (Kimberlie Crenshaw Williams, Sara Ahmed and others) was suggested.
- Methodology also has to address questions around care but without tokenism and industrial complex. It also has to do with appropriation. Often online campaigns erase the whole history of movements and what has been done as everyone is congratulating themselves in the context of having to show funders results.
- How to think of digital pleasure that is not necessarily consumerist, how we can think of and measure pleasure.
- Histories of research methodology already in place, who the research is for and who it benefits. How to build in creativity, fun and pleasure, immersive experience, modes of creativity and experience to reflect differences.
- being open to articulation outside the politics of citation allows us to tackle systemic inequality in research, bring in methods and literature from other languages and domains. The questions remains of who we cite. We automatically cite white cis men, not that they should not be included but we should mindfully include women of colour, see how we can bring that knowledge in and build on it.

### Questions and discussion

Chenai said that as useful as this discussion on methodology and readings is, how does she take it back to her context. The sources and readings are interesting and informative, but some of the readings are not accessible to those outside research institutions. How can we get access and popularise these resources that are locked into JSTORS and academic journals?

Jac said that here we have already identified a very specific need for a repository to share readings and have geeky conversations about methodology, an idea that requires much more unpacking. We need to build a space for this and find ways to share material. Some of the participants pointed to ways to share PDFs of reading material by mail and also online.

In relation to the ways in which feminist knowledge should build on other such, Becky reiterated that like a cartel we should have mutual citing pacts, and that a lot of feminist authors already privilege the voices of women, the theories and research done by women and other minority communities and vulnerable groups in their work.

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## DAY THREE - 1 OCTOBER (END AT 1:00 PM) : MOVE

### Expected outcomes:

- Discuss step forward to advance on the identified feminist research agenda for the next decade

### Sessions

- Welcome back. Eyes and ears report back. Agenda for the day
- Working groups - access, economy, embodiment and agency, movement building and methodology to continue brainstorming on the five topics and come up with more nuanced research questions
- Scamper exercise to reflect on research networking experiences. Participants were asked to think of the research experience, think of the different components in their research project – team partners, how decisions were made, funding, and sharing of findings (choose one).
  - S – Substitute
  - C – Change
  - A – Add
  - M – Modify
  - P – Repurpose
  - E – Eliminate
  - R – Reverse
- Evaluation and closure of the Meeting
- Group photo and goodbyes

## **Presentations**

Morning sessions on access, movement building, economy and labour, embodiment, research methodology were continued from previous day so documented in Day 2 report (pages 36-48).

### **Research Networks: Exercise and Discussion**

The exercise is meant to reflect on experiences, impact and outcome of doing research in a research network, essential reflections and how to make it better. The participants were instructed to:

Think of the research experience, think of the different components in your research project – your team partners, how decisions are made, funding, and sharing of findings (choose one). What are you going to substitute it with?

**S – Substitute**

**C – Change**

**A – Add**

**M – Modify**

**P – Repurpose**

**E – Eliminate**

**R – Reverse**

Kalyani in this session shared the Gender at Work framework for change that divides change along two axis (formal – informal and society – individual). She shared that when we put a project to the donor, we are often asked what it will do or achieve and in that context it is important to locate our project within these four quadrants of change. Policy reform is the most visible, but changes in habits, behaviour at the individual level is actually what is needed to bring about all other changes.

The person from MENA shared that methodology has to be adapted to different communities, that it is important when doing research to think of yourself as a facilitator for the community. This would change the editing process, the traditional ways of collecting and doing research, of even sharing it and the goals would also be reversed.

Safia spoke about the experience of working in a research team, and said that working around the world in a close, coordinated way is quite difficult, that to push out results would take many weeks. What she would change would be to get feedback sooner on certain research topics, instead of three countries there could be six teammates (two in each country) so they consult each other. What she would eliminate would be wasteful exercises, meetings without an agenda and tangential discussions.

Jenny spoke about her experience in pan African research networks and said that it was important to know who was coordinated and with whom “the buck stops”. Process is really important in terms of the research journey to document all the learning that is happening and cross-country learning. She said that it was essential to meet face to face in the beginning, mid-way to share, and ideally at the end.

Tigist shared that in her experience what she would change would be entering a project as an external gender consultant, and that she would prefer to be part of projects from the beginning. What she would change would be the tools she had at her disposal, and broadly

to have more autonomy in relation to the research. She said that it was essential after she and the team had finished the research paper, to go back to the community and have a conversation with them to get them to start thinking.

Chenai reiterated what many others had said in relation to their experience in research network, that she would change and ask for more clarity of expectations and roles, what is expected as the project lead and what researchers on the ground expect from you because often it's a one-way direction and it should ideally work both ways.

Elena said that she has been working in networks where she is the node of completion of specific tasks, even when she is not really able to contribute to discussions. Catalina shared that she would like to alter the prosaic and text-based ways in which most research projects are done, especially methodology, and to add more visual thinking, creativity and arts

Caitlin said that it is rarely documented that we are expected to collaborate with other people but that others are not interested in what you do. This often makes it difficult to create research networks where attention is unequal between differing projects.

Horaicio Sivori shared that he often missed the possibility to do more in-depth analysis beyond what's expected of the mother project, and often doesn't have the autonomy to do it, or the ability (financial in particular) to allocate resources for that.

The person from MENA said that in research networks what is often uneven are the ideas around ethics and accountability. Not everyone always has the same understanding and agreement about it.

Jac agreed with this and said that what was most important in the research network is trust, especially when people come from different political positions, but we still have to be able to keep that within the network as a source of creative tension.

## EVALUATION AND CLOSING

All the participants were given a survey sheet that asked for their evaluation of the expert group meeting. It included questions such as: **What I like or what worked; and what I didn't like or didn't work of the whole workshop?**

One informal feedback that we received from the "eyes and ears" that were designated on the first day was that the participants felt that they were unsure of their role in terms of future research plans after this meeting, and what their role would be.

Katerina closed the meeting by thanking Jenny, Kalyani and Jac for their facilitation, Shook for logistics, Elena and Cathy for their help with the visuals, and everyone for their contribution. She said that we appreciate the time taken out and active participation in this meeting by people in the middle of writing their thesis. She also thanked Ruhiya and Matthew, and IDRC for supporting the expert group meeting and participating in the discussions.

